

Permanence of Moral Character.

True indeed are these words by Joseph Cook:

This universe up to the edge of the tomb is not a joke. There are in this life serious differences between the right hand and the left. Nevertheless, in our present career, a man has but one chance. Even if you come weighted into the world, as Sinbad was with the Old Man of the Sea, you have but one chance. Time does not fly in a circle, but forth, and right on. The wandering, squandering, desiccated moral leper is gifted with no second set of early years. There is no fountain in Florida that gives perpetual youth; and the universe might be searched, probably, in vain for such a spring. Waste your youth; in it you shall have but one chance. Waste your middle life; in it you shall have but one chance. Waste your old age; in it you shall have but one chance. It is an irreversible natural law that character attains final permanence, and in the nature of things final permanence can come but once. This world is fearfully and wonderfully made, and so are we, and we shall escape neither ourselves nor these stupendous laws.

It is not to me a pleasant thing to exhibit these truths from the side of terror; but, on the other side, these are the truths of bliss; for, by this very law through which all character tends to become unchanging, a soul that attains a final permanence of good character runs but one risk, and is delivered once for all from its torture and unrest. It has passed the bourne from behind which no man is caught out of the fold. He who is the force behind all natural law is the keeper of His sheep, and no one is able to pluck them out of his hand. Himself without variability or shadow of turning, he maintains the irreversibility of all natural forces, one of which is the insufferably majestic law by which character tends to assume final permanence, good, as well as bad.—Joseph Cook.

Lincoln's Regard for Life.

A striking incident in Mr. Lincoln's official life is related by Judge Bromwell, of Denver, who visited the White House in March, 1865. Mr. Seward and several other gentlemen were also present, and the President gradually came to talk on decisions of life and death. All other matters submitted to him, he declared, were nothing in comparison to these, and he added:

"I reckon there never was a man raised in the country on a farm, where they are always butchering cattle and hogs and think nothing of it, that ever grew up with such an aversion to bloodshed as I have; and yet I've had more questions of life and death to settle, in four years, than all the men who ever sat in this chair, put together. But I've managed to get along and do my duty, as I believe, and still save most of them; and there's no man knows the distress of my mind. But there have been some of them I couldn't save—there are some cases where the law must be executed. There was that man—who was sentenced for piracy and slave trading on the high seas. That was a case where there must be an example, and you don't know how they followed and pressed to get him pardoned, or his sentence commuted; but there was no use of talking. It had to be done; I couldn't help him; and then there was that—who was caught spying and recruiting within Pope's lines in Missouri. That was another case. They besieged me day and night, but I couldn't give way. We had come to a point where something must be done that would put a stop to such work. And then there was this case of Beal, on the Lakes. That was a case where there had to be an example. They tried me every way. They wouldn't give

up, but I had to stand firm on that, and I even had to turn away his poor sister when she came and begged for his life, and let him be executed, and I can't get the distress out of my mind yet."

As the kindly man uttered these words, the tears ran down his cheeks, and the eyes of the men surrounding him, moistened in sympathy. There was a profound silence, in which they rose to depart. Three weeks after, the President was killed.

The Right Place.

"If only I were somewhere else than just here; if only my companions and surroundings were different; if only my work in the world were better suited to my tastes and peculiarities—how much more efficient, as well as happier, I should be in life!"

This is the thought of a great many of God's dear children. But what a mistake it is! God knows each child of his through and through. He knows where that child belongs, and what that child needs. He has set the station, he has fixed the sphere of that child. And just there, with just those surroundings and at just that life-work, that child can better serve God and find truer enjoyment than would elsewhere be possible. You may seem to be making a poor success of life in your present position; but of one thing be sure; you could never fill another place satisfactorily, if you do not fill this one—and fit into it easily while you are doing its duties.—S. S. Times.

The Surprise of Unbelief.

Why are Christians so much surprised when God answers prayer? Why is it regarded as an unusual thing? One instance of evident answer is repeated and re-repeated as a wonder almost too great to be believed. Unbelief is at the root. Is it such a strange thing that God should fulfill His promises? Would it not be more strange if He failed to do so? We marvel when God answers our prayers, and Jesus marvels at our unbelief which shuts the door against His answers. According to our faith it is done to us, and that is the very reason so little is done. Faith is so weak, that answers to prayers are necessarily few. Stronger faith would bring richer blessings. When we believe enough to expect God to do all that He promises, answers to prayers will become as common as daily favors from the kindest parents.—Our loving Father will give liberally when we believe undoubtingly. His hand is always stretched out to give, but ours seldom held out to receive. Those who wait on the Lord renew their strength, while those who ask and haste away, receive nothing. It is singular experience to regard God's promises as "yea and amen," because our evil hearts of unbelief suspect they are not quite true. He that believeth shall not be ashamed. O, Lord, increase our faith!—Advocate of Holiness.

—It is stated that Mr. Bronson Alcott,—father of Miss Alcott who wrote "Little women"—after drifting through Unitarianism, Pantheism and some other isms, has recently confessed his belief in Jesus Christ. At his own request he met a number of his friends in the parlors of Rev. Dr. Withrow, of Boston, and made known to them his belief in Jesus. He has been a faithful attendant on Joseph Cook's lectures, and it is said they have had a deepening effect on his spirit, and that he is a much changed man in his belief.

—No gilt-edged rule.—Being willing to do more for others than you are willing for them to do for you.

—Thinking is only talking without the sound, and much talking is only sound without the thinking.

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